

Case Study: Paper Waste Prevention
Metro Regional Government, Portland
February 3, 2005

Overview

Metro is a progressive regional government agency that serves as a role model for many students of government. There are about 325 employees at the main planning facility. A variety of paper saving initiatives have been implemented. A Council Resolution prompts the agency to use the “Natural Step” systems conditions as a model to move the agency towards their goal of sustainability.

Technology Strategies for Paper Reduction

- ◆ Metro began a Re-use Paper Pilot in 2004. The ambitious goal of this program is to reduce the use of virgin paper consumption by using every side of every piece of paper. Paper that is blank on one side is loaded into copiers and printers for drafts or other documents to be printed on the blank side. The Canon Copier representative was consulted beforehand and gave approval for the use of their equipment in this program. They would like to improve the program by allowing people to choose the drawer selection for Re-Use Paper on workstation screens.
- ◆ The E-Paper initiative uses a production quality scanner to input invoices and other accounting documents. Employees and auditors have easy access to necessary documents without printing them. This initiative also includes an electronic signature module.
- ◆ Established a public access On-Line Library with the most frequently requested documents. The library draws from 149 separate web pages from different Bureaus and programs. The system cost \$6500.00 plus about the same for labor. The system paid for itself in only 4 months through elimination of printing, postage and staff time. It was installed prior to a very busy period when more than 51,000 pages were accessed on-line that Metro otherwise would have printed and mailed.
- ◆ A major upgrade to the Peoplesoft Accounting system will allow Metro to go to a web based system with electronic timesheets, benefits and sick leave forms in Spring 2005.

Duplexing from Printers and Copiers

- ◆ Starting in 2000, Metro began a duplexing study on all copiers and printers. Between 2000 and 2002, the overall duplexing rate improved substantially from 53% to 80%.

Re-Use of Single Sided Paper

- ◆ Metro set a goal of “using every side of every piece of paper” in July of 2004. Paper printed on one side is used in copiers and printers for internal documents like memos and drafts. Before this initiative was begun, Metro consulted with their Canon Copier Representative who gave approval for the program. The quantity of paper saved from this initiative is still being evaluated.

Other

- ◆ A concentrated effort was made to reduce the quantity of telephone books that are delivered to Metro by 75%. This reduction in volume is the same as two days of total solid waste for the agency.